

## Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 IO-13 MCT-01  
AID-05 IGA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /077 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN:EHICKS  
APPROVED BY ARA:TTODMAN  
ARA/CEN:WMATTHEWS

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O P 271953Z MAY 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 123358

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PINS, SHUM, ES, US

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER CASTANEDA

BEGIN SUMMARY: ON MAY 21 ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER RICARDO CASTANEDA CORNEJO, AT THE LATTER'S INFORMAL REQUEST INITIATED THROUGH AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR. AMBASSADOR BERTRAND GALINDO ACCOMPANIED CASTANEDA. ARA/CEN DIRECTOR MATTHEWS AND COUNTRY OFFICER HICKS ALSO ATTENDED. THE HALF-HOUR SESSION CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EL SALVADOR AND CURRENT STRAINS IN OUR RELATIONS. HEAVY EMPHASIS WAS PLACED UPON THE RICHARDSON CASE AND RECENT CASES OF QUESTIONABLE TREATMENT OF AMERICANS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY INITIATED THE DISCUSSION BY EXPRESSING HIS REGRETS OVER BORGONOVO'S MURDER, CITING HIS  
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PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE AND RESPECT FOR THE DECEASED FOREIGN MINISTER. NOTING BORGONOVO'S POSITIVE ROLE IN REGIONAL AFFAIRS, HE THEN CONTINUED INTO A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE RAMIFICATIONS FOR EL SALVADOR AND THE REGION. ASKED ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR RESOLUTION OF BORDER DISPUTE WITH HONDURAS, CASTANEDA SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO RATIFICATION OF THE MEDIATION

FORMULA IN MAY OR JUNE. HE SEEMED TO MINIMIZE THE PROSPECT OF FURTHER DELAY STEMMING FROM THE DELICATE CLIMATE IN EL SALVADOR (E.G., THE STATE OF SIEGE, BORGONOVO'S MURDER, ETC.) HE MENTIONED THE KUDOS HONDURAS GAVE BORGONOVO POSTHUMOUSLY. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAID THAT HE HOPED EMOTIONAL REACTION TO THE TERRORISTS' ACTIONS WOULD NOT CAUSE THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT TO BE EXCESSIVELY HARSH IN DEALING WITH DISSIDENTS IN RETALIATION. HE THEN BROACHED THE SUBJECT OF OVERALL USG HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND IN PARTICULAR THE DEEP CONCERN IN WASHINGTON OVER CONTRADICTORY, INADEQUATE GOES EXPLANATIONS RE RICHARDSON'S FATE, AS WELL AS PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY OTHER AMERICANS DETAINED BY SALVADORAN AUTHORITIES. ELABORATING AT SOME LENGTH, HE RETRACED THE SEQUENCE OF OUR AWARENESS OF RICHARDSON'S DISAPPEARANCE, OUR DEMARCHES TO THE GOES OVER HIS WHEREABOUTS, THE LACK OF VERIFICATION OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE GOES (E.G., NO TRACE OF RICHARDSON IN GUATEMALA OR ELSEWHERE), AND AMBASSADOR LOZANO'S WASHINGTON TRIP FOR CONSULTATIONS ON THE MATTER. TODMAN EMPHASIZED THAT AMBASSADOR LOZANO'S DEMARCHES ON THE RICHARDSON CASE HAD BEEN UNDER INSTRUCTION, AND REFLECTED THE STRONG CONCERN OF THE USG. HE CONCLUDED BY INFORMING CASTANEDA OF THE HIGH LEVEL LETTER TO PRESIDENT MOLINA, TO BE DELIVERED BY WADE MATTHEWS THIS WEEK. A FRANK DISCUSSION ENSUED IN WHICH CASTANEDA EXPRESSED HIS OWN PERSONAL DESIRE TO HAVE THE RICHARDSON CASE CLARIFIED, THEREBY REMOVING AN OBSTACLE TO OUR TRADITIONALLY AMICABLE RELATIONS. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT

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AMBASSADOR BERTRAND HAD BEEN QUITE "BLUNT" IN HIS OWN URGINGS THAT THE CASE BE RESOLVED. CASTANEDA PROMISED TO PURSUE THE MATTER VIGOROUSLY, AND TO CONVEY TO PRESIDENT MOLINA AND OTHERS THE DEPTH OF USG FEELING ON THE MATTER. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY STRESSED THAT THE RICHARDSON MATTER WILL NOT SIMPLY GO AWAY, THAT THERE MUST BE A RESOLUTION AND SOME MEANINGFUL GOES ACTION ON THE CASE.

2. TODMAN THEN ALSO REFERRED TO THE QUESTIONABLE TREATMENT RECEIVED BY AMERICANS RECENTLY, SUCH AS DIFFICULTY IN ACCESS TO EMBASSY OFFICIALS. HE EXPRESSED HIS HOPES AND EXPECTATION THAT THE GOES WILL ADHERE TO BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT IN THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND WITH EL SALVADOR'S OWN LAWS. CASTANEDA AGREED THAT SUCH BEHAVIOR SHOULD CERTAINLY BE EXPECTED OF ANY GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOME OF THE GOES' LEGACY IS NOT THE MOST LAUDABLE AND THAT HE AND OTHERS, AS DID BORGONOVO, SEEK

TO CORRECT ABUSES AND MINIMIZE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. TODMAN SAID HE WOULD NOT WANT THE USG TO BE FORCED TO CONSIDER EL SALVADOR A PLACE WHERE AMERICANS COULD NOT TRAVEL, INVEST, AND LIVE WITH SAFETY.

3. THE DISCUSSION WAS RATHER ONE-SIDED, AS INDICATED ABOVE. HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S QUERY, CASTANEDA EXPRESSED HIS OUTLOOK ON CURRENT CONDITIONS IN EL SALVADOR. HE OBSERVED THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN SECTORS OF THE SALVADORAN SOCIETY WHICH HAVE DESPAIRED OF CHANGING THE DISPARITIES OF THE COUNTRY THROUGH THE SYSTEM AND THEREFORE ARE NOW RESORTING TO VIOLENT MEANS TO IMPRESS THEIR NEEDS AND DESIRES UPON THE GOVERNMENT. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION IS AN UNDERSTANDABLE OUTCOME FROM THE WAY IN WHICH POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS HAVE EVOLVED IN EL SALVADOR. WHEN TODMAN STATED HIS HOPE THAT THE GOES WOULD TRY TO EXERCISE RE-  
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STRAINT IN DEALING WITH TERRORISTS AND DISSIDENTS, CASTANEDA EXPRESSED THE SAME SENTIMENT. CASTANEDA CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE HOPES THAT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS CAN REGAIN THEIR TRADITIONAL FRIENDLY TONE AND THAT HE APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A CANDID DISCUSSION OF THE RICHARDSON CASE AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAUSES WHICH HE INTENDED TO RELAY TO HIS COLLEAGUES IN EL SALVADOR.

4. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY EMPHASIZED THAT WE REFRAINED FROM TAKING THE MATTER INTO THE PUBLIC AREA IN THE HOPE OF ARRIVING AT A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT IN PRIVATE BECAUSE WE PLACE MORE IMPORTANCE ON RESOLVING ISSUES RATHER THAN MAKING PUBLIC ATTACKS. VANCE

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**TAGS:** CASC, PINS, SHUM, ES, US, (TODMAN, TERENCE A), (CASTANEDA CORNEJO, RICARDO)  
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